Mr. Les Whitten
1401 16 St., NW
Washington, D.C.

8/22/76

Dear Les,

Were it to write an autobiography, which I will not, I'd title it Cassandra.

You ~~xxxx~~ should recall a warning I wrote you some time back. Perhaps you can see it better in the Post story of today about which I've written Larry Stern the enclosed letter.

As it relates to Larry, I ask that you regard it as private.

I do suggest that you read the citations I give Larry.

Drew and Jack were used. I knew it then and why. Contending with it was a major problem. I was of limited success only. I've given you a clue I did not give Larry. If you want more fill me in on Morgan. I've forgotten why he was my prime candidate, initially the only one.

Not only no autobiography - I don't keep a journal despite urgings. In recent years I've started putting carbons in such a file on occasion. So I'll give you a little background that may or may not be of value to you but will make a journal item for me and may later have archival value.

I'll be factual but do not take all inferences as an expression of belief.

I had a contract for Whitewash with the son of Prince Serge Cholensky. Ivan was an incompetent. His vice president, a Greek fellow who had changed his name(I was told) to Ledes was a more sinister personality. I didn't want to writ the book for various reasons so they provided an associate who was not up to it although he was a Stanley Walker man. To meet the contract I had to write the book in a month. I had to- and did- deliver by 2/15/65. I sent it in takes. I could not even write the chapters in sequence. What I could do fastest I had to do first. When I reached New York they were raving about what Ledes called a "gold-plated best-seller." Without any promos they had advance orders for 35,000, Ledes told me. While I was working with a socially-oriented woman editor of the farthar right extreme Ledes made a trip to Washington, returned and the book was rejected. I never got the advance or the return of the manuscript. I didn't have full carbons and some were on the clear side of mimeographed paper. Wasn't easy but my wife and I did it rapidly. First place I went thereafter, sent to the friend of a friend, was Praeger, whose connections then were not known. No point in giving you a long history.

I became a publisher been use of my experience with liberals at Norton. They sat on the book for months. Even asked Tom Wicker for an opinion. He was very decent from what they told me. Then they wrote me that if I would rewrite the book - and I'll never forget this so I'm not checking - around page 138, line 4, it would be a singularly important book they'd be delighted to do. I read this and realized it would require that I charge the government with conspiring to off JFK and refused. (Motive there is; proof there isn't.)

One of the reasons my writing is as elliptical as it is involves my concept of responsibility and integrity. Bear this in mind if you read that short passage in Whitewash. Unless the book has been thrown away you have it. I personally delivered each of the first four to Jack's door after phoning first. Of these you know the Post has all, as does Scott Malone. Jim is away.

The Odio story is true. I did enough checking. The FBI knew as did the Commission. Only at the end did the Commission decide no rug was capacious enough for that dust. And Tom Wadden thinks Harvey was killed, too.

Sympathetically,